

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

The Status of the Claims

Claims 1-88 (Canceled)

89. (Currently amended) A shoe upper, comprising:

one or more resiliently deformable protrusions extending from an outer surface of the shoe upper and positioned for contact with a ball,

where each protrusion includes at least an inner contoured shape portion and an outer contoured shape portion each extending from the outer surface of the shoe upper, and

where the outer contoured shape portion is deformable so as to promote engagement of the protrusion with the ball, and

wherein the inner and outer contoured shape portions of one or more protrusions in a throat region of the shoe upper are less deformable than the contoured shape portions of one or more protrusions in a lateral region or medial region of the shoe upper.

90. (Previously presented) A shoe upper as claimed in claim 89, in which at least one protrusion comprises two or more outer contoured shape portions arranged so as to radiate outwardly relative to the inner contoured shape, and where:

the outer contoured shaped portion nearest the inner contoured shape portion in the arrangement bounds the inner contoured shape portion; and

each successive outer contoured shape portion bounds the preceding outer contoured shape portion.

91. (Previously presented) A shoe upper according to claim 89, in which one or more of the outer contoured shape portions in any protrusion is deformable radially relative to the inner contoured shape portion.

92. (Previously presented) A shoe upper according to claim 91, in which one or more of the outer contoured shape portions in any protrusion is deformable radially inward relative to the inner contoured shape portion.

93. (Previously presented) A shoe upper according to claim 92, in which one or more of the outer contoured shape portions in any protrusion is deformable radially outward relative to the inner contoured shape portion.

94. (Previously presented) A shoe upper according to claim 93, in which one or more of the outer contoured shape portions in any protrusion is inclined outward relative to the inner contoured shape portion, so as to promote radially outward deformation of the outer contoured shape portion when that portion comes into contact with the ball.

95. (Previously presented) A shoe upper according to claim 89, in which the inner contoured shape portion is also able to contact the ball.

96. (Previously presented) A shoe upper according to claim 95, in which the inner contoured shape portion is deformable:

inwardly; and/or

outwardly

relative to the outer contoured shape portion, upon the inner contoured shape portion coming into contact with the ball.

97. (Previously presented) A shoe upper according to claim 90, in which, within any one protrusion, the contoured shape portions generally have the same shape.

98. (Previously presented) A shoe upper according to claim 90, in which, within any one protrusion, the contoured shape portions generally have different shapes.

99. (Previously presented) A shoe upper according to claim 90, in which the shape of the contoured shape portions is selected from the group consisting of:

Circular shapes;

Triangular shapes;

Rectangular shapes;

Square shapes;

Ovoid shapes;

Spiral shapes;

Diamond shapes;

Semi circular shapes;

V-like shapes;

Flower-like shapes; and

Other two-dimensional geometric shapes.

100. (Previously presented) A shoe upper according to claim 99, in which the shape of one or more of the contoured shape portions in any one protrusion is formed as a continuous shape.

101. (Currently amended) A kit for a shoe upper, the kit comprising:

one or more resiliently deformable protrusions, in which each protrusion includes at least an inner contoured shape portion and an outer contoured shape portion, and where the outer contoured shape portion is deformable so as to promote engagement of the protrusion with the ball; and

a mounting surface for attaching one or more of the protrusions to the shoe upper so that when attached, the one or more protrusions extend from an outer surface of the shoe upper, and are positioned for contact with a ball, and

wherein the inner and outer contoured shape portions of one or more protrusions in a throat region of the shoe upper are less deformable than the contoured shape portions of one or more protrusions in a lateral region or medial region of the shoe upper.

102. (Previously presented) A shoe upper according to claim 99, in which the shape of one or more of the contoured shape portions in any one protrusion is formed as a discontinuous shape.

103. (Previously presented) A shoe upper according to claim 100, in which one or more of the contoured shape portions in any one protrusion have one or more openings which are aligned.

104. (Currently amended) A shoe upper according to claim 103, in which one or more of the openings of one or more of the contoured shape portions in any one protrusion are formed at least ~~at the base, near or at the top, or~~ as an aperture.

105. (Previously presented) A shoe upper according to claim 100, in which one or more of the contoured shape portions in any one protrusion have one or more openings which are offset.

106. (Currently amended) A shoe upper according to claim 105, in which one or more of the openings of one or more of the contoured shape portions in any one protrusion are formed at least ~~at the base, near or at the top, or~~ as an aperture.

107. (Previously presented) A shoe upper according to claim 95, in which the inner contoured shape portion is solid.

108. (Previously presented) A shoe upper according to claim 100, in which the cross-sectional profile of one or more of the contoured shape portions is at least one of a rectangular profile, a sinusoidal profile, a triangular profile, an arcuate profile, or any other two-dimensional geometric profile.

109. (Previously presented) A shoe upper according to claim 89, in which the inner and outer contoured shape portions in any one protrusion are made from at least one of rubber, plastic, carbon fiber, fabric, resin, polyurethane, a synthetic material, or any combination of such materials.

110. (Previously presented) A shoe upper according to claim 89, in which the inner and outer contoured shape portions in any one protrusion have varying heights relative to each other.

111. (Canceled)